

A Reflection on Javanese Philosophy and Pesantren Education in the Novel

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Abstract

This study explores the interrelation between Javanese philosophy and pesantren education as represented in the novel *Hati Suhita* by Khilma Anis. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, the research investigates how cultural and religious values are expressed through the novel's characters, dialogues, and narrative structures. The findings show that the novel embodies important Javanese philosophical principles, such as *lila legawa* (sincere acceptance and willingness to let go), *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero* (honoring, preserving, and concealing family dignity), and *rukun* (social harmony and communal peace). These principles intersect with pesantren values, which emphasize *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabar* (patience and perseverance), *ta'dzim* (respect and reverence for teachers and elders), and religious discipline in daily life. Through its detailed portrayal of pesantren life—including spiritual rituals, teaching practices, and interpersonal relationships—the novel demonstrates the blending of Javanese cultural wisdom with Islamic educational traditions in shaping moral character and identity. This integration not only reinforces the role of pesantren as a center for religious learning but also highlights its function as a cultural institution that preserves and transmits ethical values. At the same time, the novel illustrates how literature serves as a medium of cultural reflection and continuity, allowing readers to engage with philosophical and spiritual dimensions in everyday life. In conclusion, this study contributes to literary and cultural scholarship by emphasizing the role of Indonesian novels in representing socio-religious identity and by offering insights into the relevance of literature for contemporary character education.

Keywords: Javanese philosophy, pesantren education, *Hati Suhita*, cultural value, literary analysis

INTRODUCTION

Javanese philosophy emphasizes the pursuit of a complete and meaningful life. Within this worldview, reflection and contemplation are seen as pathways to self-integrity and alignment with the divine (Mulder, 1983). These philosophical principles are not abstract but embedded in daily life, guiding behavior and cultural practices. At its core, Javanese philosophy seeks harmony, balance between body and soul, and peace in social relations, while avoiding unnecessary conflict (Endraswara, 2006).

Traditionally, these values were transmitted through various cultural forms, including classical literary works such as *Wulangreh*, *Wedhatama*, and *Tripama*, as well as short proverbial sayings known as *unen-unen*. These sayings convey profound moral and ethical teachings and were commonly passed on orally from parents to children, teachers to students, or elders to their communities. In contemporary times, the mode of transmission has shifted. While oral traditions are less common, *unen-unen* continue to be shared through novels, songs, and even social media platforms. This adaptation demonstrates the enduring relevance of Javanese philosophical wisdom despite changes in cultural expression.

Khilma Anis's novel *Hati Suhita* is a rich literary text that embodies this cultural transmission. The characters, Alina Suhita, Gus Birru, and Rengganis, reflect the values embedded in *unen-unen* and illustrate how Javanese philosophy shapes everyday decisions and moral choices. What makes this novel distinctive is its integration of Javanese cultural philosophy with Islamic pesantren (boarding school) education. In the narrative, pesantren values of discipline, spirituality, and moral guidance coexist harmoniously with Javanese cultural ethics, showing how tradition and religion reinforce one another. This duality reflects the author's personal background as someone deeply rooted in both pesantren and Javanese traditions.

Pesantren hold a central role in education across Java, not only as institutions of religious learning but as vibrant centers for character formation. Many parents choose pesantren for their children to secure ongoing exposure to discipline, moral education, and ethical practice. Classic studies have long shown that pesantren provide a holistic setting where religious traditions cultivate values such as sincerity, integrity, and self-discipline (Mastuhu, 1994; Bruinessen, 1999). Contemporary research continues to affirm pesantren's effectiveness in character education. For instance, Arifin and Turmudi (2019) document diverse pedagogical methods within pesantren that intentionally foster character development. Rusydiyah and Matrapi (2020) explore the application of character education values in pesantren settings, highlighting core principles like modesty, independence, brotherhood, and sincerity. Meanwhile, Susanto et al. (2023) illustrate how pesantren-based programs effectively reinforce disciplines such as responsibility, humility, and spiritual learning within Islamic boarding contexts.

Literature is an important way to share culture and teach moral values. Through stories, readers are encouraged to think about how to live well and are inspired to follow good values. For example, Gloriani (2014) shows that poetry can help shape students' character by teaching both beauty and ethics. Nofiyanti (2014) also finds that the short story *Robohnya Surau Kami* by A.A. Navis is full of moral lessons that support character education. Other studies argue that literature plays a strong role in building character when it connects with culture and local traditions (Al-Afandi & Nasim, 2024). In this way, *Hati Suhita* is not just a novel but also can be a tool for moral and cultural education, passing on Javanese and Islamic values to today's readers.

Recent studies show that Javanese philosophy still matters today. Andriyanto et al. (2022) points out that Javanese wisdom continues to guide moral living and character education. Other studies note how *Rasa rumangsa* as a form of cultural coping can offer an alternative explanation for how families experience and manage their subjective burdens (Peristiano et al., 2025). Maghfiroh & Nurhayati (2023) reveal how *Lebaran Ketupat* holds deep cultural beliefs, reflecting values like simplicity and respect for tradition through the rituals around making and sharing ketupat. Additionally, cultural traditions like *Lebaran Ketupat* have been analyzed for their deep philosophical meaning in promoting community and togetherness (Vinata & Dora, 2025). Furthermore, Wasisto (2021) explores *Kejawèn* spiritual teachings, like inward-focused practices of meditation and mindfulness, and connects them to broader themes of peace and unity in Indonesia.

While *Hati Suhita* has attracted scholarly attention from feminism, intertextuality, da'wah perspectives, stylistic, moral, and psychological (Astutik & Hikam, 2025; Eliya et al., 2024; Hamimah et al., 2021; Mardiyah et al., 2021; Pangesti & Mubin, 2024; Putrianti et al., 2020), few studies have explored its philosophical dimension. This research addresses that gap by examining how Javanese philosophy and pesantren education are represented and intertwined in the novel. By doing so, it contributes not only to literary studies but also to broader discussions on cultural preservation, character education, and the enduring relevance of traditional wisdom in modern life.

Javanese Philosophy and Ethics

Ethics (*etika*) is a branch of philosophy that studies human actions in terms of good and bad, especially when those actions are done consciously with thought and reasoning (Asy'ari, 1999). Ethics is often called practical philosophy because it deals directly with human behavior and decision-making in daily life (Magnis-Suseno, 1994). It is also known as moral philosophy, since it looks at moral ideas and evaluates actions using certain standards (Magnis-Suseno, 1993). Unlike other areas of philosophy that only focus on abstract questions, ethics also asks practical questions such as: What should people do? What should they avoid? For this reason, ethics acts as a guide for human life. Bertens (2011) explains that ethics is a study of moral behavior carried out with a critical and systematic approach. Ethics is not only descriptive but also reflective and normative. This means it does not just describe existing moral rules, but also questions, evaluates, and justifies them. In other words, ethics tries to give rational reasons for why people should act in certain ways.

In Javanese culture, ethics has a special form that reflects its spiritual and cultural worldview. Known as *Etika Jawa*, it focuses on harmony, balance, self-control, and respect for others (Magnis-Suseno, 1996). For Javanese people, morality is not only about following strict universal rules, but about reaching *rukun* (social harmony) and *tentrem* (inner peace). An action is considered good if it maintains balance between the individual, society, and the universe, but it is seen as bad if it disrupts this balance.

Because of this, Javanese ethics is relational and situational. It values humility (*andhap asor*), empathy (*tepa slira*), patience (*sabar*), and acceptance (*nrimo*). These values are often expressed through *unen-unen* (sayings) and proverbs that guide daily life. For example, the proverb *ajining dhiri saka lathi, ajining raga saka busana* (“a person’s dignity comes from their speech, and their body’s worth from their appearance”) teaches that morality is shown both in words and in outward behavior.

Philosophically, Javanese ethics can be seen as a local form of moral philosophy that combines logical thinking, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. Unlike Western ethics, which often focus on rational duty and autonomy, Javanese ethics is holistic. It considers reasoning, feelings (*rasa*), and spiritual awareness (*eling*) together (Magnis-Suseno, 1996). Ethics in Javanese thought is closely connected to cultural practices, religious values, and social life.

Recent studies show that Javanese ethics is still relevant today. Peristianto et al. (2025) found that cultural values shape how people make decisions about caregiving, that in the Javanese context, the value of *rasa rumangsa* functions as an adaptive coping strategy within caregiving situations. Andriyanto et al. (2022) highlights that Javanese wisdom continues to serve as a guide for moral life and character formation. Maghfiroh & Nurhayati (2023) show that the tradition of Lebaran Ketupat carries strong cultural meaning, emphasizing values such as simplicity and respect through the rituals of preparing and sharing ketupat. More recently, Vinata & Dora (2025) have also analyzed Lebaran Ketupat, underlining its philosophical significance in fostering togetherness and strengthening communal bonds. Similarly, Wasisto (2021) examines Kejawèn spirituality, noting that practices like meditation and mindfulness remain relevant in promoting peace and social harmony. These findings suggest that Javanese ethics is not only cultural heritage, but also useful for today’s discussions on moral education, social harmony, and intercultural philosophy. In conclusion, *Etika Jawa* stands at the intersection of philosophy, culture, and everyday practice. It shows that for Javanese people, living a moral life is not only about following abstract rules, but about living wisely, maintaining harmony, and developing noble character (*budi pekerti luhur*) in all areas of life.

Pesantren Education

Pesantren is one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Since the 15th century, when Islam began to flourish through the *Wali Songo*, pesantren has served not only as a center for religious learning but also as a moral and cultural stronghold for society. During the colonial era, pesantren even played a vital role in resistance against colonization, with figures such as KH Hasyim Asy'ari leading movements for independence. This illustrates that pesantren has never been merely an educational institution but also a socio-cultural force that has shaped Indonesian civilization (Azra, 2002).

Philosophically, pesantren education is based on the integration of knowledge (*'ilm*) and character formation (*akhlaq*). Sufi principles such as *takhalli* (self-purification), *tahalli* (cultivation of virtues), and *tajalli* (spiritual enlightenment) serve as the foundation of learning. The process of study (*ngaji*) is always intertwined with service (*ngabdi*), so that students (*santri*) not only gain religious knowledge but also learn social responsibility. This model shows that pesantren emphasizes the development of the whole person: intellectually competent, spiritually mature, and morally upright (Dhofier, 2011).

One of the defining features of pesantren is its strong emphasis on character education. Through *tarbiyah akhlaqiyah*, *santri* are trained to embody sincerity, humility, discipline, and social awareness. These values are not only taught in theory but are lived out daily in the communal life of the pesantren. Pesantren also plays an important role in preserving local wisdom by integrating cultural values, particularly Javanese principles such as *rukun* (harmony), *andhap asor* (humility), and *ajining diri* (dignity through refined speech). In this way, pesantren becomes a site of cultural and religious synthesis, creating an Indonesian Islamic tradition that is both rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith and deeply connected to local heritage (Woodward, 2012).

In recent decades, pesantren has faced the challenge of modernization. One of the most pressing issues is the integration of digital literacy into education. Recent studies show that pesantren are adapting by introducing digital literacy programs for students, both in formal curricula and extracurricular activities. Digital literacy programs that emphasize ethical technology use, online safety, and positive digital engagement can equip students to navigate the challenges of the digital world responsibly. Through such a comprehensive approach, pesantren have the potential to serve as adaptive and relevant educational models in the digital era. Building strong collaboration among Islamic boarding schools, formal educational institutions, families, and the government is essential for creating an ecosystem that supports the moral development of the younger generation (Pratama, 2025; Paramansyah et al., 2024). This effort includes integrating digital literacy with moral education in the curriculum, strengthening parental guidance, and implementing government policies that safeguard children from harmful online content.

Looking ahead, the greatest challenge for pesantren lies in maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity. Pesantren must continue integrating 21st-century competencies, such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and global awareness, while holding firmly to Islamic values. With the right approach, pesantren will remain a vital educational institution that not only enlightens minds but also nurtures character and prepares future generations to face the complexities of a changing world.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. Since the main concern of the research is the representation of Javanese philosophy and pesantren education within a literary text, the methodology is grounded in literary studies and cultural analysis. The purpose is to explore and interpret the ways in which cultural and religious values are expressed, intertwined, and symbolically represented through the characters, dialogues, and narrative structure in *Hati Suhita* by Khilma Anis. A qualitative

literary analysis is considered most appropriate, as it enables an in-depth examination of meanings, symbols, and values embedded in the novel. This approach is further supported by cultural studies, which regard literature as a reflection of the society and values from which it emerges.

Source of Data and Data Collection

The primary source of data in this research is the novel *Hati Suhita* by Anis (2019). The text is examined comprehensively with a focus on the representation of philosophical values and pesantren traditions. Secondary sources consist of scholarly works, journal articles, and books that discuss Javanese philosophy (e.g., (Endraswara, 2006; Magnis-Suseno, 1996; Woodward, 2012) and pesantren education (e.g., (Dhofier, 2011; Azra, 2002; Rusydiyah & Matrapi, 2020). These references serve to strengthen the interpretation and provide theoretical grounding for the analysis.

Data are collected through close reading of the novel, paying particular attention to several aspects. These include the presence of *unen-unen* (proverbs) and other philosophical expressions of Javanese culture in dialogues or narration, the characterization of key figures such as Alina Suhita, Gus Birru, and Rengganis who embody philosophical or pesantren-related values, and the descriptions of pesantren life including routines, teachings, and interpersonal relationships that illustrate the integration of religious and cultural values. Additionally, narrative events in which Javanese philosophy and pesantren ethics intersect are identified as significant points of analysis, as they reveal the hybrid form of cultural identity presented in the novel.

Data Analysis

The data are analyzed using a content analysis method with interpretative techniques. The analytical process involves identifying and categorizing excerpts from the text that reflect Javanese philosophy or pesantren education, coding the data into themes such as harmony, self-control, and respect for hierarchy (Javanese philosophy) alongside religious discipline, moral education, and character building (pesantren education). These themes are then compared and contrasted to reveal how they are represented and intertwined throughout the novel. The findings are interpreted in light of theoretical perspectives on Javanese philosophy and pesantren education, allowing the study to demonstrate the ways in which the novel integrates both cultural and religious values.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, triangulation is applied by cross-referencing textual interpretations with scholarly works and previous studies. Peer debriefing with colleagues in literature and cultural studies is also conducted in order to minimize subjective bias and strengthen the credibility of the findings. The research procedure includes reading the novel thoroughly to gain a holistic understanding, selecting and marking passages that reflect philosophical or educational values, classifying these passages into thematic categories, interpreting the findings with reference to relevant theories and research, and finally drawing conclusions about the interplay between Javanese philosophy and pesantren education in the novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the data analysis, the study identifies six Javanese philosophical principles and five pesantren educational values embedded in Khilma Anis's *Hati Suhita*. Each of these six Javanese principles and five pesantren values will be elaborated in detail below. Collectively, they demonstrate how the novel not only reflects personal struggles and interpersonal relationships but also embodies a broader cultural and educational framework. The intersection of these two systems, Javanese philosophy and pesantren education, illustrates a process of cultural negotiation, where local traditions and Islamic teachings

converge to shape moral identity and guide behavior. This interconnection will be further explored in the discussion of the Intertwining of Javanese Philosophy and Pesantren Education in *Hati Suhita*.

Javanese Philosophy in *Hati Suhita*

The representation of Javanese philosophy in *Hati Suhita* is one of the central elements that gives the novel its cultural depth. Javanese ethical teachings are expressed through the characters' attitudes, choices, and inner struggles, especially those of Suhita and Gus Birru. Several philosophical principles can be traced throughout the narrative:

Narima ing Pandum (Acceptance of Destiny)

One of the strongest Javanese values reflected in Suhita's character is *narima ing pandum*, accepting one's lot in life. Suhita accepts her arranged marriage to Gus Birru not merely as obedience but as a way of fulfilling destiny. Her quiet endurance shows how acceptance is not passive resignation but an active strength that allows her to maintain dignity amid suffering.

Ngendhaleni Hawa Nafsu (Self-Control and Restraint)

Another value reflected in Suhita's struggle is *ngendhaleni hawa nafsu*, or controlling one's desires and emotions. Despite rejection and humiliation, Suhita never responds with anger or revenge. Instead, she practices restraint, a deeply respected Javanese ethic that regards self-control as the key to harmony and inner strength.

Rukun (Harmony in Relationships)

The novel emphasizes *rukun*, the Javanese principle of preserving harmony in social relationships. Suhita avoids open conflict with Gus Birru or with Rengganis, choosing instead to maintain outward peace. This pursuit of harmony mirrors the Javanese cultural emphasis on social stability over personal expression.

Unggah-Ungguh (Respect and Courtesy)

Politeness and respect for hierarchy (*unggah-ungguh*) also permeate the novel. Suhita always addresses elders and teachers with humility and obedience, reflecting both Javanese and pesantren ethics. The way characters speak and act shows that courtesy is not only social etiquette but a moral obligation.

Mikul Dhuwur Mendhem Jero (Honoring and Protecting Family's Dignity)

A crucial Javanese principle embodied in the novel is *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero*, which means elevating the family's honor while burying its flaws. Suhita accepts her marriage and conceals her emotional pain to protect her family's dignity and the pesantren's reputation. Even when Gus Birru neglects her, she does not complain publicly or bring shame to her parents. Gus Birru, too, feels bound by this ethic, enduring inner conflict to uphold his pesantren family's honor. This principle explains why conflicts in *Hati Suhita* are often expressed through silence, patience, and internal struggle rather than open rebellion.

Through these values, *Hati Suhita* illustrates how Javanese philosophy continues to shape personal behavior and social identity. Suhita emerges as a model of patience, restraint, and loyalty, embodying a moral world where individual desires are often subordinated to family honor and communal harmony. By weaving *narima ing pandum*, *ngendhaleni hawa nafsu*, *rukun*, *unggah-ungguh*, and *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero* into the narrative, Khilma Anis situates her novel firmly within the framework of Javanese ethics.

Pesantren Education in *Hati Suhita*

Pesantren, as one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, has a distinct tradition of instilling religious, moral, and cultural values in its students. In *Hati Suhita*, pesantren is not merely a backdrop but an integral source of values that shape the characters' worldview and behavior. Khilma Anis highlights pesantren teachings such as *ta'dzim* (respect), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabar* (patience), and *adab* (ethics), showing how these principles influence Suhita, Gus Birru, and the community around them.

Ta'dzim (Respect for Teachers and Elders)

One of the strongest pesantren values reflected in the novel is *ta'dzim*, the utmost respect for teachers (*kyai*) and elders. Suhita demonstrates this by always obeying the instructions of her parents and *kyai*, even when it means suppressing her own desires. This obedience is not blind submission but is rooted in pesantren culture, where honoring teachers and parents is seen as a path to barakah (blessings). Gus Birru also shows reverence to his parents, though he struggles internally between filial duty and personal feelings.

Ikhlas (Sincerity in Obedience and Sacrifice)

The principle of *Ikhlas*, acting sincerely for the sake of God without expecting worldly rewards, is another key pesantren value in the novel. Suhita embodies *ikhlas* in her willingness to accept her arranged marriage and her quiet endurance of suffering. Her sacrifices are portrayed not as weakness, but as acts of devotion that bring her closer to spiritual maturity. The novel suggests that true strength lies in sincerity and devotion rather than in rebellion or outward resistance.

Sabar (Patience as a Moral Strength)

Closely related to *ikhlas* is the value of *sabar*. In pesantren ethics, patience is not passive waiting but an active endurance that strengthens the soul. Suhita exemplifies *sabar* by bearing rejection and humiliation with dignity, refusing to retaliate or complain. This mirrors pesantren teachings that patience is a central quality of the faithful, essential for spiritual growth.

Adab (Ethics and Proper Conduct)

Adab, or proper conduct, is an important part of pesantren education. In the novel, Suhita consistently shows humility and self-control, even during times of strong emotions or personal struggles. Her speech, dress, and actions consistently reflect pesantren values of modesty and self-discipline. Gus Birru, too, is portrayed as a pesantren figure who, despite his personal struggles, upholds the importance of manners and discipline in his role as a leader's son.

The Pesantren as a Space of Identity Formation

The pesantren setting in *Hati Suhita* functions not only as a religious institution but also as a moral and cultural space where characters learn about sacrifice, loyalty, and communal responsibility. The pesantren community reinforces values such as respect, patience, and harmony, which resonate with Javanese philosophy. This blending of Islamic and Javanese values shows how pesantren plays a central role in shaping Suhita's character and the moral direction of the story.

Through the principles of *ta'dzim*, *ikhlas*, *sabar*, and *adab*, the novel presents pesantren education as a source of moral resilience and spiritual depth. Suhita's strength is rooted not only in Javanese cultural values but also in pesantren teachings, which guide her behavior and give meaning to her sacrifices. Khilma Anis portrays pesantren as a living tradition that continues to shape personal identities, moral choices, and communal values in modern contexts.

The Intertwining of Javanese Philosophy and Pesantren Education in *Hati Suhita*

One of the most fascinating aspects of *Hati Suhita* is how Khilma Anis integrates two seemingly different systems of values, Javanese philosophy and pesantren education, into a coherent moral framework that guides the characters' lives. Rather than being in conflict, the two traditions complement and reinforce each other, creating a hybrid ethical system that resonates strongly with Indonesian cultural identity.

Harmony and Ta'dzim: Parallel Respect for Order

Javanese philosophy emphasizes *rukun* (harmony) and respect for social order, while pesantren culture upholds *ta'dzim* (respect) toward teachers, elders, and parents. In the novel, Suhita embodies both values simultaneously, she maintains harmony in her household by

respecting her husband and his family, even when she feels unacknowledged. This double layer of respect, Javanese *rukun* and pesantren *ta'dzim*, shows how cultural and religious ethics intertwine to sustain communal stability.

Ikhlas and Lila Legawa: Sincere Acceptance

The pesantren principle of *ikhlas* closely aligns with the Javanese concept of *lila legawa* (sincere acceptance without complaint). Suhita's endurance of suffering reflects both traditions: she accepts her arranged marriage not as a burden but as a spiritual duty. The novel demonstrates that *ikhlas* and *lila legawa* are not passive resignation, but conscious acts of surrender that require emotional strength and trust in divine wisdom.

Sabar and Mikul Duwur, Mendem Jero: Patience and Moral Nobility

The pesantren virtue of *sabar* (patience) resonates with the Javanese principle of *mikul duwur, mendem jero* (to lift the good qualities of others high while burying their flaws deep). In *Hati Suhita*, Suhita chooses patience not only to preserve her dignity but also to protect the reputation of her family and husband. By embodying this dual ethic, she shows that true nobility lies in patience combined with generosity of heart, where personal pain is endured for the sake of preserving honor and harmony.

Adab and Tepa Selira: Ethical Sensitivity in Action

Pesantren teachings about *adab* (proper conduct) align with the Javanese principle of *tepa selira* (empathy and self-restraint). Suhita consistently demonstrates sensitivity to others' feelings, carefully controlling her words and actions even in moments of deep emotional pain. This ethical self-discipline reflects how pesantren and Javanese values converge in shaping a person's moral compass based on empathy, humility, and responsibility.

Discussions

The findings of this study highlight how Khilma Anis's *Hati Suhita* embodies a unique intertwining of Javanese philosophical principles and pesantren educational values. The novel demonstrates that literature is not only a medium for storytelling but also a vehicle for transmitting cultural ethics and moral frameworks. By embedding six Javanese philosophical principles, *narima ing pandum* (acceptance of destiny), *ngendhaleni hawa nafsu* (self-control), *rukun* (harmony), *unggah-ungguh* (respect and courtesy), *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero* (honoring family dignity), and *lila legawa* (sincere acceptance), together with five pesantren values, *ta'dzim* (respect for teachers and elders), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabar* (patience), *adab* (proper conduct), and pesantren as a space of identity formation, *Hati Suhita* reveals the cultural negotiation that occurs between local Javanese traditions and Islamic teachings.

This intersection reflects what Woodward (2012) describes as the "continuum" between Javanese culture and Islamic values, where neither system is erased but rather blended into a coherent moral framework. For example, Suhita's *narima ing pandum* parallels the pesantren teaching of *ikhlas*, showing how acceptance of destiny is simultaneously a cultural ethic and a spiritual virtue. Similarly, the Javanese principle of *rukun* resonates with *ta'dzim*, both emphasizing respect, harmony, and the maintenance of social order (Dhofier, 2011). These parallels reveal that the convergence of Javanese philosophy and pesantren education strengthens the characters' moral identity, rather than creating conflict between cultural and religious worldviews.

Furthermore, the integration of these two traditions illustrates how pesantren education does not exist in isolation but is deeply embedded within local cultural contexts (Azra, 2002). The pesantren values portrayed in the novel are expressed through Javanese idioms and lived practices, demonstrating that pesantren functions not only as a religious institution but also as a site of cultural preservation and transformation. In this sense, *Hati Suhita* supports the view of Magnis-Suseno (1994) and Bertens (2011) that ethics, whether

philosophical or religious, emerges most powerfully when embodied in daily behavior and interpersonal relationships.

The intertwining of Javanese and pesantren values in *Hati Suhita* also illustrates a model of cultural resilience. Instead of opposing modern individualism with rigid conservatism, the novel depicts characters negotiating their desires and obligations within a framework of patience, sincerity, and empathy. This finding resonates with Oktaviani and Setiawati's (2023) argument that pesantren, while rooted in tradition, continuously adapts to social and cultural changes without losing its core values.

In conclusion, the novel demonstrates that the integration of Javanese philosophy and pesantren education forms a hybrid ethical system that is both culturally rooted and spiritually oriented. This ethical synthesis not only shapes the characters' personal struggles but also reflects a broader Indonesian identity where local wisdom and Islamic teachings mutually reinforce one another. Such a framework provides insights into how literature can become a site of cultural negotiation, identity formation, and value transmission across generations.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined how Javanese philosophy and pesantren education are represented and intertwined in Khilma Anis's *Hati Suhita*. Through characters, dialogues, and narrative events, the novel demonstrates that cultural and religious values are not separate domains but are mutually reinforcing in shaping personal identity, family relations, and social harmony. Javanese philosophical principles such as *rukun* (harmony), *lila legawa* (sincere acceptance), and *mikul duwur, mendem jero* (upholding others' dignity and burying their flaws) appear consistently in Suhita's attitudes and decisions. At the same time, pesantren values like *ikhlas* (sincerity), *sabar* (patience), *ta'dzim* (respect), and *adab* (moral conduct) structure her spiritual resilience and moral integrity. The novel portrays Suhita as the embodiment of both traditions, reflecting the way Indonesian Islam has historically negotiated between universal religious values and local cultural wisdom. Thus, *Hati Suhita* functions as both a cultural mirror and a cultural guide. It mirrors the realities of pesantren families in Indonesia, while also offering a normative example of how individuals can live harmoniously at the intersection of tradition and religion.

For literary studies, this research highlights the importance of viewing novels not only as artistic expressions but also as cultural texts. By employing a descriptive-analytical approach, scholars can uncover the ethical, philosophical, and religious layers of literature. *Hati Suhita* is a significant case because it shows how literature can serve as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values, shaping identity, and negotiating between tradition and modernity.

From a cultural and religious perspective, the novel illustrates the continuing relevance of Javanese philosophy and pesantren education in contemporary Indonesia. Despite modernization and globalization, these traditions remain central in guiding moral conduct and social life. The text also demonstrates how pesantren education is not merely about ritual practice but about instilling deep values of patience, humility, and devotion that align with Javanese ethical ideals.

The findings of this research can inspire educators, especially in pesantren and character education, to use literature as a medium for moral teaching. Novels like *Hati Suhita* can bridge abstract values with concrete examples of lived experience, making them effective tools for shaping students' critical thinking and ethical awareness. On a broader level, the novel encourages Indonesian society to embrace its hybrid identity, where Islam and Javanese culture strengthen, rather than oppose, each other. Ultimately, *Hati Suhita* illustrates a vision of Indonesian identity that is both spiritual and cultural, both religious and

humanistic. By analyzing this novel, we learn that literature is not only about telling stories but also about preserving wisdom, cultivating ethics, and inspiring future generations to live with harmony, patience, and dignity.

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